CHARACTER SKETCHES

(Written for THE COURIER.)

LIVING among the wickedness and sin and noise and trouble and worry of this earth there are a few people who believe that it is possible to attain a state of holiness in this life, and who imagine that they are leading perfect lives. Disciples of earthly holiness are not numerous; but there are few communities where this class is not represented. And like most aggressively good people, they are very tiresome. The great majority of us are frail beings, and we haven't much use for this kind of goodness.

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One man whom I know was taken ill with a peculiar form of religion in his youth, and he has never recovered from the attack. Its effect was to leave him, not with his face pock-marked, or his hair fallen out, but with an idea that he ought to be what man can never be this side of the portals of paradise, wholly perfect, and he has been trying to live up to this idea ever since. Religion has become his passion, and if it has fired him to an ambition to become wholly good, it has also dried up the sap in him and made him a bloodless, emaciated, dreadfully uninteresting person; as cold and unsympathetic as a pillar of marble.

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This man has just three ideas; to work during the day, to be good, to read his Bible at night. He has a conscience; and this conscience is a nightmare. It hounds them to death. He lives among rational people and breathes pure air, and I don't believe the birds stop singing when he goes by; certainly the sun shines on him as on other people. Laughter and good cheer occasionally greet him, and there is life, full, healthy life around him; life with its pleasures and joys and brightness, as well as its sorrows and sombre things; and yet this man who thinks he is called upon to make himself holy, is oblivious to everything save himself and his purpose to keep perfectly free from contact with worldly things.

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A masterpiece of art might be set before him; but if it represented a profane subject he would see only a piece of smeared canvas. He might be placed in a rich meadow in the spring time, with the music of the bubbling brook and the song of the lark, and the delicate beauty and fragrance of the violet, and the sweet scented breezes from the surrounding fields, and he would see and hear nothing. His disease has spoiled his life. He can no longer enjoy the things other men enjoy. He lives between the pages of his Bible and his idols are Moses and Elijah and the temple and Matthew, Mark, Luke and John et al. He is stultified intellectually and he is undergoing, physically, a process of self embalming. But he has the consciousness that he is not guilty of the weaknesses that beset his fellowmen; he is above their follies and frivolities; he knows he has done no wrong, and he can almost repeat holy writ from the beginning to the end. He has dedicated himself to holiness, and I dare say he thinks he is happy.

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It is a good thing there are not many of these people in the world. They are a blight on the race, and a detriment to religion. If there is a heaven it is very certain that they will not have the only open sesame. If they did, other people would be content to stay outside. For sanctimonious people are not agreeable companions. In reaching after holiness they have lost manliness, and manliness is a pretty good quality. I believe in religion and in Christianity; but the Christian religion does not tell a man to jump into a coffin of holiness and close the lid to pleasure and the bright and good and healthy things of this life, and embalm himself.

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Apropos of what I said recently about the facial peculiarities of criminals, an opportunity for the observation of which is furnished by the collection of photographs at the Nebraska penitentiary, there is an interesting article in the March number of *McClure's* magazine, being an interview with M. Bertillon on the scientific method of identifying criminals in use in France. Some reproductions of photographs are given which illustrate very forcibly what I said about the singular facial characteristics of criminals.

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M. Bertillon, who has made extensive researches into this subject, is of the opinion that the identification of criminals by scientific methods, the use of photography and an infinite variety of measurements and descriptions, etc., will bring about valuable anthropological facts. When asked whether he thought the system would tend to establish a criminal type, he said: "Undoubtedly the statistics of the service will be used more and more for ethnographical and authropological statistics. I have already done something with them. Here is a chart showing the color of the eyes in the different parts of France, from the maroon of the Spanish border to the blue of the Channel; and there is another, giving the relative length and breadth of the head. As for the criminal type, that is a delicate question."

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The interviewer remarked: "Then you have never sought to confirm the doctrine of Lambroso's school, that certain anotomical characteristics indicate the criminal?" M. Bertillon replied as follows: "No, I do not feel convinced that it is the lack of symmetry in the visage, or the size of the orbit, or the shape of the jaw, which make a man an evil-doer. A certain characteristic may incapacitate him for fulfilling his duties, thus thrusting him down in the struggle for life, and he becomes a criminal because he is down. Lambroso, for example, might say that, since there is a spot on the eye of the majority of criminals, therefore the spot indicates a tendency to crime; not at all. The spot is a sign of defective vision, and the man who does not see well is a poorer workman than he who has a strong, keen eye-sight. He falls behind in his trade, loses heart, takes to bad ways, and turns up in the criminal ranks. It was not the spot on his eye which made him a criminal; it only prevented his having an equal chance with his comrades. The same thing is true of other so-called criminal signs. One needs to exercise great discretion in making authropological deductions. Nevertheless, there is no doubt but our archives have much to tell on all questions of criminal anthropology."

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Scientists may debate the questions raised by M. Bertillon. But no one will dispute the fact that there are certain marked criminal characteristics. There is a clearly observable physical, as well as mental deformity, in perhaps the majority of criminals. TEYN.

(To be Continued.)

LITERARY NOTES

The March number of the Atlantic Monthly opens with the third installment of Mrs. Deland's "Philip and His Wife." Charles Egbert Craddock's "His Vanished Star" appears for the last time before its publication, as now completed, in book form. The Rev. Walter Mitchell's "Two Strings to His Bow" is also ended. The remaining piece of fiction is a fanciful, pathetic tale of New England, "The Fore-Room Rug," by Mrs. Kate Douglas Wiggin. Of uncommon interest to students of modern European politics is Professor Jeremiah W. Jenk's account and estimate of "A Greek Prime Minister: Charilaos Tricoupis." Greece, in the earliest days of her life, is represented in Maurice Thompson's "The Sapphic Secret," a study of the peculiar charm of Sappho's diction. Still further into the east and the past goes Sir Edward Strachey's "Talk at a Country House" on Assyrian Arrowheads and Jewish Books. But the present and the near-at-hand speak forth again delightfully in Miss Edith Brower's "Is the Musical Idea Masculine?" and Mr. Bradford Torrey's "On the Upper St. John's." To the women—and the men—who have come to think womankind capable of all masculine achievements, Miss Brower's shrewd consideration of the work of women in music will be particularly suggestive. A very striking poem is Archibald Lampman's "The City of the End of Things."

The complete novel in the March number of Lippincott's is "A Desert Claim," by Mary E. Stickney. It is a charming tale of ranch life in northern Colorado. Gilbert Parker's serial, "The Trespasser," reaches its ninth chapter. "The Inmate of the Dungeon," by W. C. Morrow, is a story of uncommon power. Joel Chandler Harris in "The Late Mr. Watkins of Georgia; His Relation to Oriental Folk-Lore," compares a curious legend of his own state with one of India. "A Prophet of the New Womanhood," Annie Nathan Meyer considers Henrik Ibsen from an unfamiliar point of view. Emma Henry Ferguson tells "More about Captain Reid," the confederate blockade runner. John Gilmer Speed describes "The Training of the Saddle Horse." Dr. Charles C. Abbott writes of "Bees and Buckwheat," and Charles McIlvaine of "The Evolution of Public Roads." In "Talks with the Trade," the subject of "Literary Mendicancy" is presented. The poetry of the number is by Anna Robeson Brown and John J. Meehan.

A more notable magazine in the names of its contributors than the March McClure's has rarely come from the press. Kipling, Herbert Spencer, Robert Louis Stevenson, Conan Doyle and Octave Thanet certainly make a list that is hard to equal. The short story by Mr. Kipling is one of his best; the short story by Octave Thanet is one of her best. Conan Doyle's contribution, "The Glamour of the Arctic," is not a story, but it has the interest of one, for it is an account of Arctic whaling, written with Dr. Doyle's best grace, from his own personal experience. Of the Stevenson-Osbourne serial, "The Ebb Tide," since it opened in no wise uneventfully in the February number, it is much to say that it grows in interest as it progresses. Herbert Spencer writes of his intimate friend of forty years, the late Professor Tyndall. It is in part reminiscent; in part critical. Closeness and sympathy of personal relation give a special value also to a biographical and character study of Ruskin by M. H. Spielmann, editor of the "Magazine of Art." Several portraits of Ruskin and pictures of his home and country add interest to the article. There is a profusion of illustrations in this number, by the way. In freshness and importance of information Miss Ida M. Tarbell's account of the scientific method of identifying criminals in France must be pronounced the leading article of the number. It is illustrated from photographs especially provided by M. Bertillon, the inventor of the method. The subjects of the "Human Documents" portraits are Andrew Lang, J. T. Trowbridge and Renan.

Perhaps never in the history of modern journalism has any newspaper gained so rapidly in public favor as the Chicago Inter Ocean. Within the past two years it has, by adopting progressive methods and injecting push and enterprise in all its departments forced itself into the very front rank of great Chicago newspapers. That this popularity is deserved is beyond question. The publisher during this time, Mr. H. H. Kohlsaat, has spared neither expense nor effort to attain his ideal—and he has succeeded.

Uncompromisingly republican on all national issues. The Inter Ocean does battle for what it believes to be the true faith in a manner that at once commands the attention of the public and respect of all. It can be recommended to those who desire a clean, reliable, enterprising metropolitan family newspaper.

The March number of the Chicago magazine of Current Topics is replete with timely articles covering a wide range of subjects. The contributors include some of the most popular magazine writers in the country, whose work will insure a cordial reception for the March number. This magazine has been making giant strides in popular favor, by reason of its high character and wide range of its matter, and the popular subscription price of the publication.